



STATE OF MAINE
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04333-0001

Paul R. LePage

GOVERNOR

October 1, 2014

The Honorable Michael Michaud
Member of Congress
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Michaud,

Thank you for your response dated September 29, 2014, regarding natural gas infrastructure.

Unfortunately, it illustrates a startling lack of awareness of the severity of the energy crisis in New England. Prices are skyrocketing, and jobs are threatened. We need additional natural gas capacity in our region to bring prices down and keep businesses open. The existing bureaucratic process that you praise may work for those who oppose natural gas and lower prices, but it will not give relief to Maine soon enough. We need action now.

This is not a moment for additional study. The Governor of Massachusetts wants to study the issue more, and you want to make sure that federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency can take their time to do their own "analysis." This is the type of thinking that is holding back our country. Ninety days is enough time to figure out if a massively important infrastructure project—which will save billions for our region—can move forward. Without these projects, we will continue burning oil to keep the lights on, which is both expensive and harmful to our environment.

All levels of New England's elected officials should be moving these projects forward as expeditiously as possible. The Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) testified to the severity of the problem before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power on stating that New England's pipelines are "very constrained." That was last year. Prices are now anticipated to spike to historic levels. There are times when our country must move forward with critical infrastructure and the federal bureaucracy must respond. That is exactly what the Natural Gas Permitting Reform Act (H.R.1900) would accomplish by setting deadlines for bureaucrats.

You expressed concern that the Natural Gas Act now allows FERC to make a determination that a proposed interstate pipeline is "in the public convenience and necessity" and provide this infrastructure to be built with the use of eminent domain. Again, this is in existing law. The Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act (H.R. 1900) does not alter this authority. Instead, the legislation expedites the permitting process for other federal agencies to allow FERC to do its work and move these projects forward.



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I encourage you to reach out to energy-intensive manufacturers and saw mills, as well as the pipeline companies looking to serve our region, and ask whether the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act" would be useful in helping their businesses. Getting these projects permitted would be very beneficial by creating jobs for Mainers and improving our economy.

Rather than following what Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) or the Massachusetts governor thinks about natural gas permitting, I would suggest that you talk to some businesses right here in Maine about their burdensome electric bills. Their opinion is what really matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. LePage". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul R. LePage
Governor